

Turning Up the Heat

Miami-Dade Service Center

“CSI Miami” shoots on location on District lands

Picture this – a raging wilderness fire, a high speed boat chase, a charred dead body, and detectives dressed to kill. Who knew environmental restoration could be so exciting? It must be Miami...“CSI Miami” that is.

The District land management and stewardship programs got a fiery boost recently when “CSI Miami” shot on location to film an episode of the hit television drama on the District’s Southern Glades Wildlife Environmental Area and Model Lands in southern Miami-Dade County.

“The television show location manager followed the proper protocol and contacted District Right of Way to begin the process for using our property on a temporary basis,” said Jason Smith, environmental analyst for the District’s land stewardship program. “The producers wanted to use our land for some chase scenes and ‘wild’ fires so we coordinated their filming with controlled burns that we and Fish and Wildlife were already planning for the area. It was a real team effort with multiple departments and agencies lending a hand.”

More than 900 acres were put back into their natural rhythms through prescribed burns by the Division of Forestry, and millions of television viewers got another “hot” episode of their favorite show.

Okeechobee, Orlando Service Centers get in on the hot action

District land stewardship staff working out of the Okeechobee and Orlando Service Centers and the DuPuis Management Area have gone far and wide to include partners interested in using fire as a land management tool. Participating in a late January prescribed burn at the KICCO Wildlife Management area in Osceola County were representatives from a number of federal agencies who came from as far away as California, Oregon and Virginia to help. Federal agencies partnering with the District on the effort included the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forestry Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

David Birdsall, Orlando Service Center, initiated the cooperative agreement with the federal agency partners, giving the fire managers from across the nation this opportunity to travel to a warmer climate and have a really hot time. Jeff McLemore, a land stewardship employee at the Okeechobee Service Center, served as the burn manager at KICCO. Following the leadership of Birdsall and Bill Helfferich, land stewardship supervisor, the District has utilized this program and cooperative agreements with other state agencies to accomplish our prescribed burn goals throughout the year. Trained staff members from the Okeechobee Field Station, Okeechobee Service Center and from the Vegetation Management Division at headquarters also routinely assist with prescribed burns.

Periodic fire is a natural element of native Florida ecosystems. The District uses prescribed burning as a tool to maintain and encourage the restoration of native plant communities, enhance wildlife habitat, and reduce the buildup of hazardous fuel loads.



Top: Miami-Dade Service Center Director Jose Fuentes (left) and Sr. Intergovernmental/Outreach Specialist Audrey Ordenes (right) help coordinate a ‘CSI Miami’ shoot with star David Caruso (center) on District-owned property in western Miami-Dade County.

Above: Jeff McLemore, Okeechobee Service Center (center), goes over plans for a prescribed burn with representatives from a variety of federal agencies who traveled to Osceola County from as far away as Oregon to participate in the event.



This watercolor painting by Specialist Engineering Associate Heidi Bazell was one of many works donated by employees and raffled to aid tsunami victims.

South Asian Earthquake has Ripple Effect on Floridan Aquifer



University professors Tissa Illangasekare (left) and Charles Harvey (center), and SFWMD Office of Modeling Director Jayantha Obeysekera (right) spent 10 days in Sri Lanka assessing groundwater impacts in areas affected by the tsunami.

The massive, Dec. 26 underwater earthquake off the coast of northern Sumatra had a ripple effect on earth's underground water levels approximately 8,000 miles away in Florida. Water levels in the South Florida Water Management District's deep Floridan aquifer monitoring wells in Collier and Okeechobee counties and other wells throughout the agency's 16-county region, saw sudden spikes of up to 4 inches approximately 60 minutes after the earthquake, which measured 9.0 on the Richter Magnitude Scale.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists estimate that seismic waves from the devastating, tsunami-causing earthquake traveled across the globe at approximately 7,400 miles per hour, causing small water-filled crevices in the Floridan aquifer to expand and contract. This action forced water in and out of the wells. District hydrologists concluded that no damage to the Floridan aquifer or water supply resulted from this event.

The wells, ranging in depth from 1,350 feet to 1,900 feet, are used by District hydrogeologists to monitor and learn more about the Floridan aquifer system, an underground layer of porous limestone that covers most of Florida. The system is used as the primary

“All things are connected like the blood that unites us all.”

– Chief Seattle (1786-1866)

water supply source for millions of people, businesses and farms throughout much of the state. It is a secondary source of water in the area south of Lake Okeechobee.

DISTRICT SCIENTIST LENDS EXPERTISE TO SRI LANKA

South Florida Water Management District Office of Modeling Director Jayantha Obeysekera, Ph.D., P.E., traveled to Sri Lanka in mid-February as a member of a panel of distinguished experts sent to assess the impacts to groundwater in areas affected by the tsunami.

“I have visited most of the places that have been devastated by the tsunami and am saddened by the suffering of the survivors,” said Obeysekera, a Sri Lanka native. “I am also aware of the extensive damage to the water supply infrastructure and the environment in tsunami-affected regions of Sri Lanka. An agency like the District, with its expertise in all fields of water resource, has the potential to provide technical assistance.”

The panel, sponsored by the U.S. National Science Foundation, includes two other distinguished members: Professor Tissa Illangasekare, Ph.D., Colorado School of Mines, and Professor Charles Harvey, Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

During the 10-day trip, the panel visited several locations in the tsunami-affected areas in the eastern and southern provinces of the country. This initial visit explored the technical water and environmental issues to be investigated by a larger NSF panel visiting Sri Lanka later.

District employees raise \$3,350 for tsunami relief

In response to the devastating South Asian tsunami, South Florida Water Management District employees raised \$3,350 by organizing an art raffle. The money was donated to UNICEF for tsunami relief efforts. Eight talented District artists generously donated their work for the raffle, which included paintings, pottery, stained glass and jewelry.